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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

November 30, 2006

TO: Special Education Directors
Special Education Cooperative Directors

FROM: Pat Reichert, Data Manager
Division of Special Education

RE: Special Education Child Count Data Collection - Educational Environment Data
(Setting of Service) for Children Ages 3-5

As you know, the codes to be used for reporting setting of service for children ages 3-5 in the Child Count Data collection have changed substantially this year. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education, has provided a technical assistance guide in the form of frequently asked questions and answers to help school districts determine the correct setting of service code to be used for children ages 3-5. These questions and answers specifically address children ages 3-5 who are attending a regular early childhood program, which is defined as:

A program that includes at least 50 percent non-disabled children (attendance need NOT be funded by IDEA, Part B funds). Examples are: Head Start, kindergarten, reverse mainstream classrooms (children receiving special education in programs designed primarily for children with disabilities, but include 50 percent or more children without disabilities), private preschools, preschool classes offered to a prekindergarten population by the public school system, and group child care.

The setting of service codes that refer to regular early childhood programs are:

- 23 - Regular Early Childhood Setting (at least 80% of the time)
- 24 - Regular Early Childhood Setting (from 40% to 79% of the time)
- 25 - Regular Early Childhood Setting (less than 40% of the time)

See the Child Count Instruction Manual for more specific definitions, on the Web at the following link:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/PDF/ChildCount/ChildCountManual2007.pdf>.

The Question and Answer guide has been posted on the Web at the following link:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/iris/WestatPRESCHOOLLREQA.pdf>

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The guide can also be found with the list of resources for the Child Count Data Collection under the INSTRUCTIONS button on the Citrix Login Screen, titled "Q&A on Educational Environment for Children Ages 3-5." That link is: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/Citrix/>.

If you have questions, contact Pat Reichert at 406-444-4403 or e-mail at preichert@mt.gov.